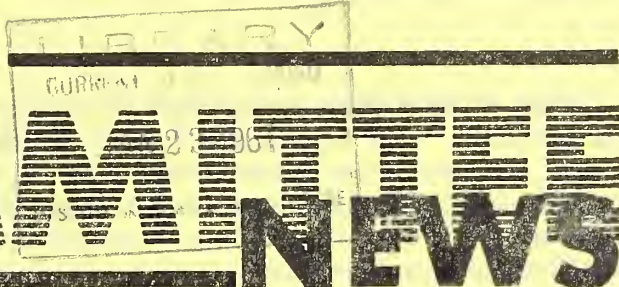


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NUTRITION

For exchange of
information on
nutrition education and
school lunch activities



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, Washington, D. C.

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"DO-IT-YOURSELF" POSTERS TEACH NUTRITION

A brief presentation of ideas and techniques for preparation of visuals appropriate to use in school lunchrooms was made at the 1960 annual meeting of the American School Food Service Association by Dr. Mary Hill.

Attention was directed to posters because they are particularly appropriate and time would not permit adequate coverage of the entire area of visual aids.

Some of our readers have requested that this material be shared with others who are working in school or community nutrition education programs. Therefore, in this issue of NCN we report a few ideas that were presented, and describe selected techniques for the preparation and storage of posters. Much of this material, developed in the nutrition education laboratory at Teachers College, Columbia University, was made available by Dr. Clara Mae Taylor, professor of nutrition. Under her guidance, students tested and evaluated these ideas and techniques by creating appropriate posters and using them in numerous school and community programs.

Nutrition, like other subjects, can be taught more effectively if illustrated with good visual materials. Nutritionists, school lunch managers, teachers, and other health workers find that acquiring and maintaining suitable posters present specific problems.

For example, the excellent posters which can be purchased or are available free, often do not meet the particular need in the school or community. In such situations, better posters can be prepared locally.

The busy worker, even if artistically inclined, also often finds it impossible to allocate large blocks of time to the

preparation of suitable illustrative material. The services of an artist are not always available. Many workers have learned that artistic talent is helpful but not essential to the preparation of posters. Planning, organization, a little imagination, a few basic principles, and some "do-it-yourself" techniques and materials can result in effective posters and reduce preparation time.

PLANNING FOR POSTERS

Collecting Ideas

Magazines, books, newspapers, old posters, and paper or cardboard food models provide ideas, pictures, and short "to-the-point" titles for posters.

Many workers have found it wise to record ideas or titles for posters and to clip and file suitable colored pictures as they discover them for possible future use.

One nutritionist reports her method for filing content material. She keeps three folders. In one, she puts pictures that are suitable for use without any changes. The second holds pictures that can be adapted for use; they may need some adjustment in size or content. The third folder contains topic ideas and slogans, phrases, or mottos that can be used to communicate simply and directly important nutrition facts.

Good posters communicate a simple, direct message at a glance. When the point is made, the poster has served its purpose for the particular audience. For this reason, a frequent change of posters adds to effective communication.

Planning Storage

It is wise to plan posters with the available storage space in mind. An accumulation of posters, however excellent, poses a storage problem.

Posters of similar dimensions stack easily and compactly. A good size to use in large rooms such as school lunchrooms, laboratories, or auditoriums is the standard 22- by 28-inch poster board. Many schools and offices are equipped with metal cabinets containing shelves 24 inches in depth. Standard-sized posters can be easily stored in such cabinets or on a closet shelf. Some smaller posters may be useful. For these, poster boards can be cut in half (14 by 22 inches) and still stored compactly with larger ones.

To show the nutrient contribution of particular foods or menus bar graphs can be prepared on the inside of opened manila folders; these can be coded and filed in an ordinary filing cabinet.

In demonstrating meal selection, colored cardboard food models are a useful aid. These can be used on flannel boards (if a strip of sandpaper is applied to the reverse side of each model), thumb tacked to bulletin boards, or stapled to plastic or fabric place mats. The models can be stored in a box and reused. Place mats stack and store easily in drawers of standard dimensions. Flannel boards, if made to the size of posters, store compactly with them.

PREPARATION OF POSTERS

Choosing Pictures

Colorful pictures on posters should attract attention and convey part or all of the message to be communicated. For example, if elementary school children need to be reminded to drink milk, a poster might feature a boy, a girl, and a glass or container of milk with a simple, direct caption "Drink Your Milk." One-idea posters of this type have proved to be both popular and effective in school lunchrooms.

Adapting Pictures

Size.—One easy way to make pictures larger is to use a pantograph—a device that resembles a compass. This device can be purchased in most art supply stores. It has two pencils which can be set at varying distances from each other, the exact distance depending on the enlargement needed. As the picture is traced with one pencil, the other pencil reproduces a larger picture.

One school lunch manager reports that another easy method for enlarging pictures is to use an opaque projector. She places the picture in the projector, adjusts the image to desirable size, and then traces it.

Content.—Often a picture which is arresting, colorful, and a good size for poster use needs only some small change, to make it convey a nutrition idea.

For example, a magazine cover pictured a small boy—freckle-faced, happy, and obviously healthy. He was holding a sign which referred to baseball. An alert student covered the sign with one which read "For Perfect Health" and added a stiff paper model of a glass of milk. The caption read, "Sure, I always drink milk." This proved to be a popular poster with elementary school boys.

Mounting Pictures

A practical way to prepare pictures for poster use is to paste them on stiff paper (old manila folders are excellent for this purpose) before carefully cutting them out. Corrugated paper, 2 to 3 inches square, or smaller than the picture, pasted to the back before it is glued to the poster holds the picture slightly away from the poster board. The resulting third dimension and shadow is very effective.

This method of mounting has the added advantage of making the picture reusable. When the poster begins to look worn or has served its purpose, you can use a sharp knife to remove the picture complete with backing and save it to use later on another poster.

With a file of prepared pictures a poster can be prepared on very short notice.

Use of Cardboard Food Models

It often helps to show a variety of foods which constitute an adequate diet. If pictures from magazines are gathered for this purpose, it is often time consuming to adjust the size of the various pictures so that the finished poster looks realistic. Colored cardboard food models such as those prepared by various food industry groups are particularly good for this purpose because they are uniform in size. One set of models with corrugated paper backing can be reused almost indefinitely.

A student-made poster using this idea has been popular with children and adults in several localities. The large colored picture of an attractive little girl's head mounted on a yellow background attracted attention. Models of foods from the four food groups were related to the appearance of the child by the caption, in black script, which read, "Whatever I eat turns into me."

Lettering

One of the most time-consuming activities for the amateur poster maker is lettering titles or captions. There are, however, several easy ways to produce good-looking, easy-to-read lettering.

Stencils.—These can be purchased in several suitable sizes at art supply shops, department stores, and variety stores. They come in solid line or broken line letters. The

solid line letter is easier to read but broken line stencils can be used and the lines connected to make solid letters. India ink and a broad nib pen used to fill in stencil outlines produces lettering that is eye compelling and easy to read. Lettering pens with a selection of points to produce lines ranging in breadth from a fine line to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch can be purchased wherever art supplies are sold.

Script.—Legible and uniformly written script adds interest to a poster. Light pencil guidelines for both capital and lower case letters help to produce good-looking script captions. It is wise to write first in pencil to be sure words are evenly spaced. A penpoint that makes a $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch line produces good, readable script and is easy to handle for the person who has had limited practice with a lettering pen.

Cut-and-paste letters.—Stencils can be used to form letters on construction paper. These are then cut and pasted on the poster.

Sets of paper letters, usually silver or gold foil, with mucilage backing can also be purchased in art supply and variety stores.

Paint spray lettering.—This is a relatively new technique for the amateur poster maker. It is fast, easy, and produces interesting effects.

Most paint stores now sell enamel in spray cans. One needs only to shake the can well before using, then depress the dispenser cap to apply paint in a fine spray.

To use this method, a set of letters is needed. These can be cut from cardboard (about the weight of writing pad backing) or purchased from an art supply store (these are usually plastic). The set of letters can be reused indefinitely.

Arrange letters on the poster and lightly spray them and the surrounding area with paint which contrasts with the color of the poster board. The paint will set in a few minutes, the letters can then be removed and a professional looking caption is the result. A little practice on several thicknesses of newspaper will allow the user to decide how heavy a spray is needed to achieve the desired effect. Clear, bright contrasts are particularly effective.

ASSEMBLING POSTERS

In assembling a poster to make a particular point, care should be taken in choosing the component parts to suit the audience.

Perhaps teenage girls need to be reminded that milk is an important part of their diet. An admonition to drink milk may be met with resistance, but an attractive poster

that more subtly points up the relationship of milk to health may prove effective.

One such poster featured a pair of appealing gray kittens—taken from a magazine cover. Blue neck ribbons were added and the picture was mounted to show a third dimension on a light blue background with a deep blue stenciled caption which read, "We believe in good nutrition."

The same picture could have been used on a poster intended for primary grade children by using a title suited to the age group such as, "We drink milk, too."

PERFORATED HARDBOARD POSTERS

Hardboard, with $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch perforations spaced an inch apart, lends itself to poster use. Painted a clear, bright color it makes an excellent reusable poster board. It is available at lumberyards and can be cut to any desired dimensions. It will store easily if it is cut to poster size.

Small metal paper fasteners, used extensively in schools and offices to hold punched papers together, will fit the $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch perforations to fasten pictures and titles to the board.

Pictures can be prepared as they are for poster use with one addition. A strip of manila or oaktag paper (about $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch wide and shorter than the picture) must be stapled to the corrugated paper before it is glued to the back of the picture. Paper fasteners at either end of the added strip will fasten the picture to the board. Titles or captions can be made on strips of poster board and attached to the perforated board in the same manner.

Pictures and titles prepared for use on perforated board can be stored in smaller spaces than those required for completed posters. As the need arises, posters can be assembled in a very short time. Because ideas can be executed quickly, workers are less reluctant to remove and disassemble the posters when the message has been conveyed.

SOME SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE

If posters are being prepared for use in classrooms or school lunchrooms, there are several sources of assistance that may be available in schools.

Art Classes

Many school systems have an on-going, sequential art program directed and taught by specialists. Lettering, picture copying (including adjustment of size), and poster making are usually taught as a part of such a program.

If the nutrition consultant, school lunch manager, teacher, nurse, or other worker in a nutrition education program consults with the art supervisor when the art activity plans for the school year are being made, it may be possible to have students adapt pictures, letter captions, or make nutrition posters as a planned classroom activity.

Posters are most likely to meet the needs of the nutrition education program if there is a sharing of ideas in the planning. Nutrition workers should explain (1) the particular messages to be conveyed, (2) the audience for whom they are intended, and (3) how they are to be used. Art teachers and students can then create effective posters.

Nutrition consultants have found their enthusiasm for nutrition to be contagious. As art teachers and students learn more nutrition they see more suitable pictures and develop more good ideas for effective posters.

When students' work is used, lessons take on added meaning for the learner and teaching effectiveness is increased.

Home Economics Classes

Many home economics teachers working with teenage boys and girls provide experiences which help young people gain an understanding of the nutritive value of foods. One such experience is the preparation of bar graphs showing the nutritive contribution of common portions of foods frequently included in student diets.

School lunch managers in many schools have found it helpful to display bar graphs showing the nutritive value of foods served in the school lunch. Home economics teachers and school lunch managers have cooperated in preparation of the graphs, and students have gained understanding by pictorializing the nutritive contribution of foods.

Special Education Classes

Some schools have separate classes for children who are especially slow in learning. Children in these classes often realize their limitations. Experiences must be provided to help such youngsters also realize their abilities.

There are many things slow learners can do well. For example, many of them can mount and cut pictures nicely. Others can fill in stenciled letters with india ink and do it reasonably well.

Permitting these children to work occasionally on poster

materials that will be used not only helps the school lunch manager or nutrition worker but provides an opportunity for handicapped youngsters to make a worthwhile contribution to the school lunch program.

MATERIALS

Listing of these materials is for the information of readers and does not necessarily mean recommendation. Materials or information on them may be obtained from the addresses given.

Applied Nutrition

FOOD AND YOUR WEIGHT. Louise Page and Lillian J. Fincher. 1960. 30 pp. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Home and Garden Bulletin No. 74. Available from Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C. \$0.15.

FOOD FOR GROUPS OF YOUNG CHILDREN CARED FOR DURING THE DAY. Helen M. Hille. 1960. 58 pp. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Social Security Administration. Children's Bureau Publ. No. 386. Available from Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C. \$0.25.

Food Preparation and Storage

COOKING OUT-OF-DOORS. Compiled by Alice Sanderson Rivoire. 1960. 206 pp. Available from Girl Scout Equipment Agency stores or from National Equipment Service, Girl Scouts of the U. S. A., 830 Third Avenue, New York 22, New York. \$1.95.

HOW TO CHOOSE AND USE NEW JERSEY PEACHES. Irene H. Wolgamot. 1960. Leaflet No. 202. Extension Service, College of Agriculture, Rutgers—the State University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

HOME STORAGE OF VEGETABLES AND FRUITS. Farmers' Bulletin No. 1939. U. S. Department of Agriculture. Rev. 1960. 19 pp. Available from Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C. \$0.15.

Bibliography

Selected references for nutrition. PA 1-3160. Nutrition Council of the Public Health Federation, 312 West Ninth Street, Cincinnati 2, Ohio.

Visuals

SELECTED SCHOOL LUNCH AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS. Rev. 1960. 50 pp. Available from American School Food Service Association, P. O. Box 8811, Denver 10, Colorado. \$0.25.